

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, BOILER
HOUSE
(Veterans Administration Facility, Jefferson Barracks, Building No. 5)
(Veterans Administration Hospital, Jefferson Barracks)
(Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks
Division)
VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division
1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
Saint Louis
Independent City
Missouri

HABS MO-1943-E
MO-1943-E

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. VETERANS HOSPITAL, JEFFERSON BARRACKS, BOILER HOUSE (BUILDING 5)

HABS No. MO-1943-E

- Location:** Building 5, VA Medical Center, 1 Jefferson Barracks Drive,
St. Louis, Missouri
USGS Quadrangle Oakville, Missouri
UTM Coordinates 16 7258134 E 9965629 N
- Date of Construction:** 1922-1923
- Designer:** Treasury Department Supervising Architect's Office
- Contractor:** James Stewart and Company
- Present Owner:** U.S. Bureau of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Present Use:** Engineering Shops
- Significance:** The Boiler House (Building 5) was part of the early 1920s effort to build modern hospitals for U.S. military veterans. The Boiler House continued to serve as a boiler facility until a new boiler house (Boiler House 2, Building 70) was built in 1952. Since then, the old Boiler House (Building 5) has served the hospital complex as an engineering shop.
- Project Information:** This project was sponsored and funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as mitigation for the demolition of buildings at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, a property that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places via consensus determination of eligibility between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office.

Description:

The original Boiler House (Building 5) is a one-story stucco-clad building with a very low-pitched gabled roof and metal replacement doors and windows. The building is nine bays wide and three bays deep. The facade is the south wall of the building, and this wall contains replacement double-hung metal windows and a flat metal replacement door. The east and west walls have metal replacement windows and also feature concrete parapets at the tops of the walls. A small one-story addition with a flat roof sits on the east side of the building. The north (rear) wall of the building has a flat metal replacement door and a series of replacement windows. The building faces a large asphalt parking lot and is across the parking lot from the original Attendants' Quarters (Building 4, currently vacant).

The interior of the original Boiler House has a steel mezzanine on the west side of the building. A wood ramp and a steel spiral staircase lead down from the mezzanine into a large basement workspace on the eastern three-fourths of the building that is used for maintenance activity. The large workspace includes locksmith and welding equipment. The large workspace also has concrete walls and a concrete beam and slab ceiling. An enclosed concrete basement room on the west side of the building retains what appear to be steam pipes and equipment associated with the building's former use as a boiler house. Today, the entire building is used for maintenance activities.

History:

The U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, was part of an early 1920s plan to reform health care for veterans. Before the early 1920s, health care for veterans had in many cases been dispensed from improvised facilities that were in poor condition and not well suited for the task. After a well-publicized tour of some of these hospitals, the U.S. Veterans Bureau began planning and construction on new, modern hospitals throughout the United States. Planning for the U.S. Veterans Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, including drafting of construction drawings for the Boiler House (Building 5), took place in 1922. Construction on the Boiler House and other major buildings at the hospital began in 1922 and was completed in 1923.

Original floor plans show that the Boiler House had a mezzanine level on the southwest corner of the building, and a spacious basement level that included a large open space for the boilers and a pump room on the west side of the building. The mezzanine space included an engineers' office for the operators of the boilers, plus a restroom. The large boiler space in the basement level was reached from the mezzanine by an iron spiral staircase. The basement level contained two large boilers that were coal-fired; the pump room to the west would have contained the water tanks and pumps necessary to feed water to the boilers, and may have also contained equipment needed to distribute steam to the other buildings of the hospital complex. An underground chamber on the south side of the

building was the fuel room. Coal was delivered to a yard next to the building and was dropped into the fuel room via a series of circular hatches in the ceiling that are labeled on the architectural plans as coal holes. Since the facility did not have automatic feeder equipment, it appears that the boilers may have been stoked with coal by hand.¹

The Boiler House continued to serve its original purpose through the 1930s and 1940s. In the early 1950s, work began to expand facilities at the Jefferson Barracks VA facility to convert the campus into a neuropsychiatric hospital. A series of large new buildings were constructed for the hospital from 1950 to 1952, making the original Boiler House inadequate to serve the campus. A new, larger Boiler House (Boiler House 2, Building 70) was completed in 1952 to serve the expanded VA campus. The old Boiler House (Building 5) appears to have been converted at this time to a pump house, and then later to a maintenance facility, which is its current function. The building's interior retains some original steam pipes and equipment in the pump room, and the iron spiral staircase that connected the old engineers' office space with the boiler room floor is still extant.

Current redevelopment plans call for demolition and construction of new facilities at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division. The Boiler House (Building 5) is scheduled for demolition in the coming years as part of this redevelopment project.

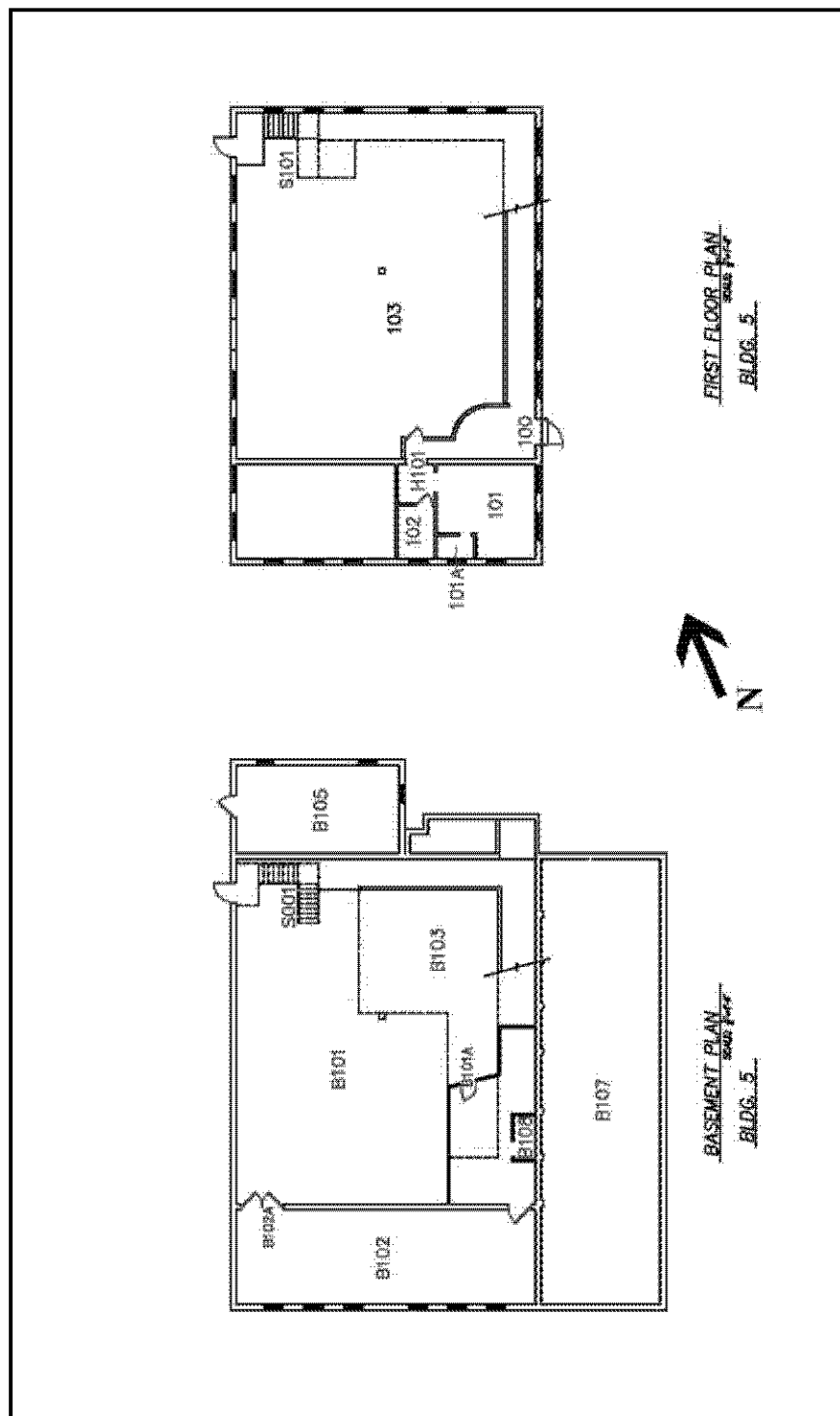
Sources:

Department of the Treasury, Supervising Architect's Office. *U.S. Veterans Bureau, Jefferson Barracks, Boiler House*. Washington D.C., 1922. On file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.

Historians:

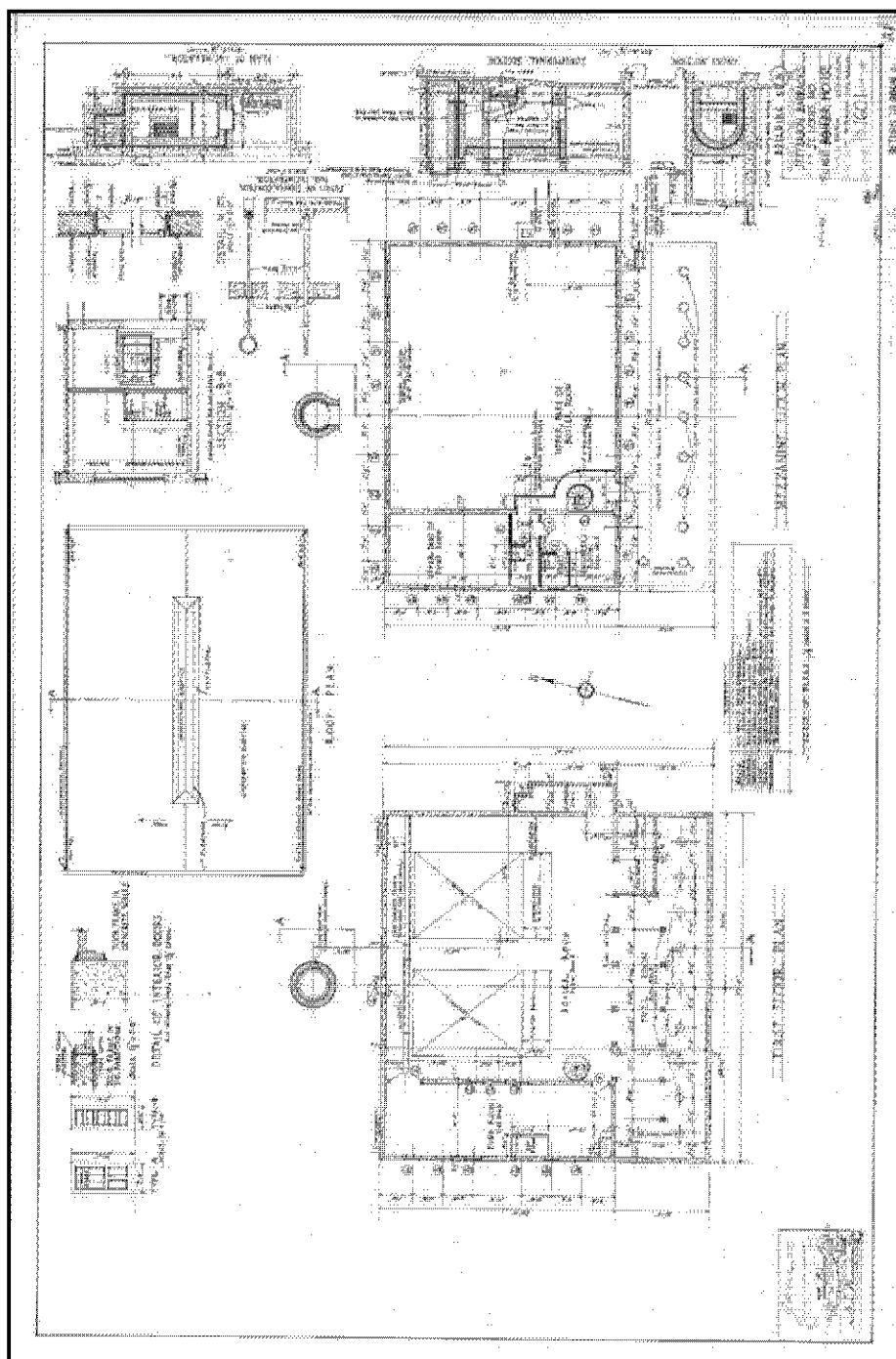
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¹ Department of the Treasury, Supervising Architect's Office, *U.S. Veterans Bureau, Jefferson Barracks, Boiler House*, 1922, on file at St. Louis VA Medical Center, Jefferson Barracks Division, Building 3T.



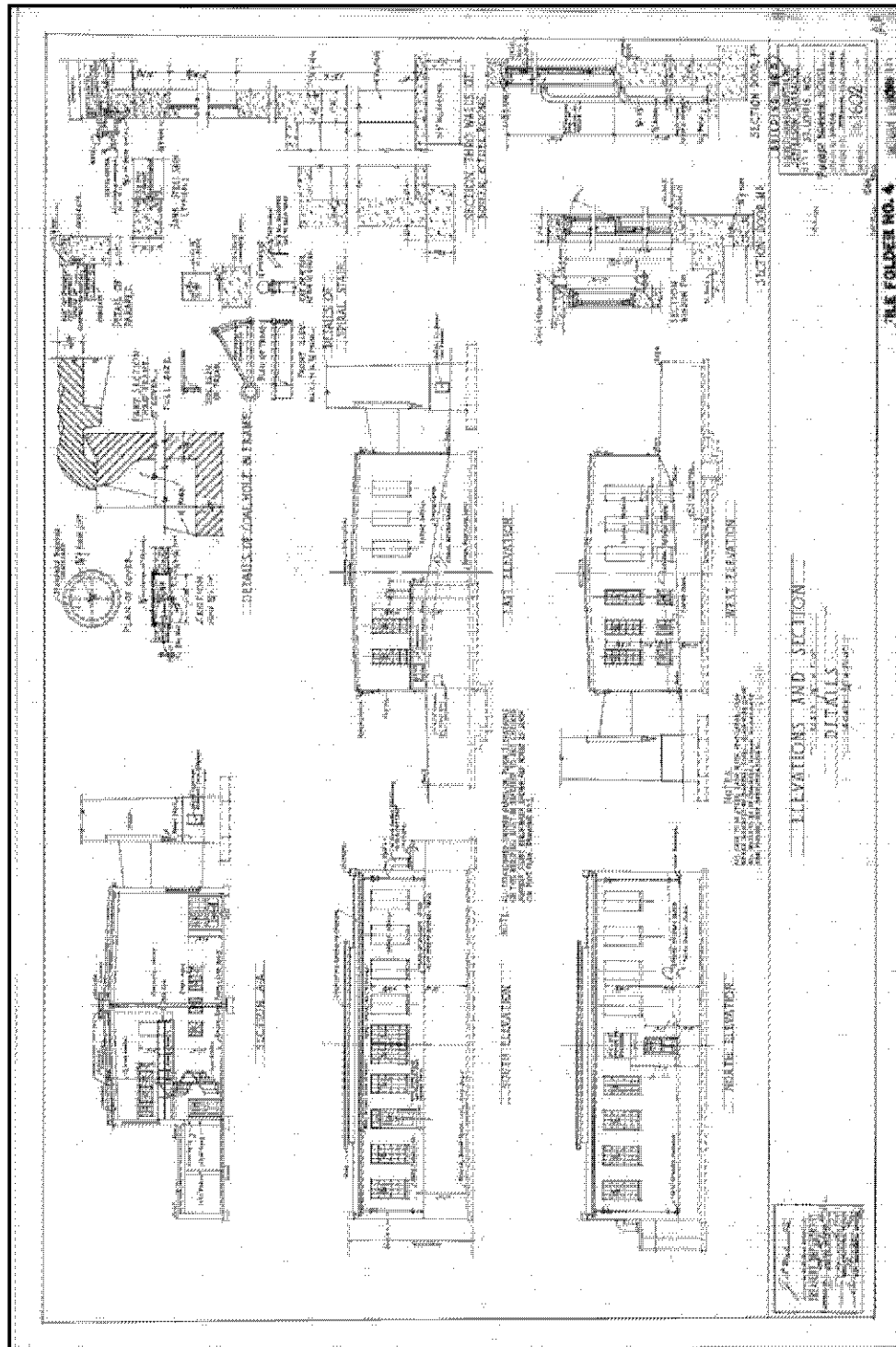
Boiler House 1 (Building 5), current basement and first-floor plans

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Original floor plans of the Boiler House (Building 5), 1922

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Original elevations and sections of the Boiler House (Building 5), 1922